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STATE FOR NEA/MAG, NEA/IPA

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TAGS: [MO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#)  
SUBJECT: ABU MAZEN VISITS MOROCCO; HAMAS NEXT?

Classified By: Ambassador Thomas T. Riley for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) FM Benaissa invited Ambassador to the MFA the morning of April 13 to discuss the visit of Palestinian Authority President Abu Mazen (note: Abu Mazen arrived in Morocco April 12. King Mohammed held a dinner for him the evening of April 12 in Casablanca, attended by Arab diplomats and senior government officials. Abu Mazen is expected to remain in Morocco until April 15 for additional meetings with PM Jettou and other GOM officials. End Note). Benaissa said the King had asked him specifically to inform the US about the King's discussions with Abu Mazen. Benaissa stressed this was a working visit, not an official state visit, though the King had met Abu Mazen at the airport on arrival in Casablanca. Among other deliverables, Benaissa said the King had offered to provide the Palestinians a new embassy in Rabat, as the current one is run down.

¶2. (C) Benaissa noted there was considerable pressure on Morocco to receive Hamas Secretary General Khaled Mishal, who has already visited Tunisia and Algeria. The King had decided to accept a visit by Mishal but as of this meeting had not yet extended the invitation, wanting to let the US know first of his decision. In addition, should the visit happen, the King wanted to make clear the Hamas official would be received by Deputy FM Fassi Fihri, not by the King or Foreign Minister, Benaissa said. This decision was taken to deny Hamas the credibility that a higher level reception would convey.

¶3. (C) Furthermore, Benaissa continued, if Hamas does not abide by bilateral and international agreements undertaken by the Palestinian Authority in the past, and if Hamas maintained its "present positions," Morocco would have no further contact with Hamas at any level. Benaissa said Morocco believed it was important for the sake of the Palestinian people and for peace and stability in the region to adopt this stance toward Hamas. According to Benaissa, the King had relayed this message to Benaissa, along with the instruction to convey it to the US, in front of Abu Mazen, who had nodded in agreement. Moreover, Benaissa stated, if Hamas engaged in or perpetrated any act of violence, Morocco would condemn it and cut all ties with Hamas and not give any money to the Hamas government.

¶4. (C) Benaissa said Abu Mazen was not encouraged by the behavior of Hamas thus far, but said the Israelis did not help the situation by continuing "daily operations" against the Palestinians. Abu Mazen hoped the Israelis would calm things down. Benaissa added that cutting off funding for the Palestinian Authority hurt the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people. Such strategies had not worked in Sudan or Iraq, and would not in Iran either.

¶5. (C) Ambassador asked if there was a proposed date for the Mishal visit. Benaissa said no, it was not fixed yet. Ambassador asked whether the Moroccan message to Hamas also included recognition of Israel's right to exist. Benaissa said yes, that was part of Morocco's position toward Hamas.

¶6. (C) Closing, Benaissa said he looked forward to his visit to Washington in early May and hoped to be able to see the Secretary.

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¶7. (U) Post will report further details from Abu Mazen's visit septel.

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Visit Embassy Rabat's Classified Website;

<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/rabat>

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Riley